

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY  
 INTERVIEW WITH HARRY SMITH ON CBS-TV PROGRAM, "THIS MORNING"  
 PENTAGON  
 SEPTEMBER 16, 1994

HARRY SMITH: Ships, troops, aircraft. An invasion of Haiti would take a massive military commitment. The man responsible for putting all the pieces together is the secretary of defense, William Perry. He is with us live this morning from the Pentagon.

Good morning, Mr. Secretary.

SEC. PERRY: Good morning, Harry.

MR. SMITH: Are all aspects of the invasion ready to go?

SEC. PERRY: Yes, they are. I was down Wednesday, visited our commanders and our troops on board the Eisenhower, our aircraft carrier, and the Mt. Whitney, which is a command and control airplane, talked with literally hundreds of troops. And they are ready, and I'm confident they're ready and they believe they're ready.

MR. SMITH: When is this going to take place?

SEC. PERRY: I can't tell you that, Harry, for operational reasons, but soon.

MR. SMITH: Have you had the opportunity to hear some of the reaction from General Cedras to President Clinton's speech last night?

SEC. PERRY: Yes, I have.

MR. SMITH: And what is your reaction to what he has had to say? He has been quite adamant in his refusal to budge.

SEC. PERRY: That's very disappointing. This forceful entry plan that we have put together is one which would use overwhelming force against the Haitian military, and it will be successful. The reason we're using overwhelming force is we want to minimize the casualties on both sides. Nevertheless, even though some people have described this as a walkover, we do anticipate casualties, and

therefore we very much would like to avoid having to make a forceful entry. Therefore, I'm particularly disappointed to hear Cedras's adamant position that he's not going to back down. The only way we can avoid those casualties at this point is that if he is willing to leave the island at this point and surrender the -- give up on the military regime.

MR. SMITH: Well, he has made it quite clear that he has no intention of doing so. He has also suggested that what this all might ignite is a Haitian civil war, Haitian taking up arms against Haitian. Is the United States ready in any way to deal with that sort of ensuing chaos?

SEC. PERRY: The plan which has been put together, Harry, has several different phases to it, the first phase of which separates the military from the leadership and effectively nullifies the effectiveness of the Haitian military, and the second plan of which -- second phase of the plan is to bring in the police force that would establish security and control on the island. That second phase follows very quickly on the heels of the first.

MR. SMITH: Are you ready, though, for a situation that would be much more volatile than what we see in the country right now?

SEC. PERRY: We have prepared, both with our military force and with our police force, we have prepared for contingencies of the kind you describe. That is correct.

MR. SMITH: Did the president seek your counsel in regard to this invasion?

SEC. PERRY: Yes, many times.

MR. SMITH: Can you tell us what your advice to him was?

SEC. PERRY: No, I never describe in public what I advise the president. But I will tell you that I've been in constant, continuing consultation with him, as has General Shalikashvili, the chairman. We have described to him in great detail what our military plan is. We've given him estimates of how long it would take to execute, what the success would be. We've described what we

call the down sides, the variants that could cause us problems with the plan, what we would do to overcome those problems. We've had long and detailed discussions with the president about this plan.

MR. SMITH: How many lives might this cost?

SEC. PERRY: I cannot quote a figure for you. Even if I were to quote one, Harry, I must say that it's a very imprecise art trying to estimate casualties. But we do expect that there will be casualties. The purpose of this plan being as powerful as it is is to minimize those casualties.

MR. SMITH: Is the United States military ready to follow the orders of the commander-in-chief? I only have a few seconds left. The relationship between the two has been contentious.

SEC. PERRY: Yes, they are. And as I said, I had face-to-face meetings with our commanders and with our troops as recently as Wednesday. They are ready.

MR. SMITH: All right. Mr. Secretary Perry, we thank you so much for joining us this morning. We do appreciate it.

SEC. PERRY: Thank you.

END